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GROSS GST COLLECTIONS CLOCK ALL-TIME HIGH OF ₹2.36 LAKH CRORE

Goods and Services Tax collections rose 12.6% year-on-year to an all-time high of ₹2.37 L cr in April, with a net mop-up of ₹1.92 L cr

DOMESTIC REVENUE RISES TO ₹1.9 LAKH CRORE

GST revenue from domestic transactions rose 10.7% to about ₹1.9 lakh crore, while revenue from imported goods was up 20.8% to ₹46,913 crore. "The figures showcase the resilience of the Indian economy and the effectiveness of cooperative federalism," Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said, while expressing her gratitude to the taxpayers | **P10**

'OVERALL OUTLOOK REMAINS OPTIMISTIC'

- Central GST collection from domestic transactions stood at ₹48,634 crore in April, while state GST mop-up was ₹59,372 crore
- While a moderation in absolute GST collections is anticipated next month due to the global economic climate, the overall outlook for Indian economy is optimistic, said EY Tax Partner Saurabh Agarwal

2.09

LAKH CRORE IS THE NET GST COLLECTION AFTER REFUNDS

CHENNAI ▪ MADURAI ▪ VIJAYAWADA ▪ BENGALURU ▪ KOCHI ▪ HYDERABAD ▪ VISAKHAPATNAM ▪ COIMBATORE ▪ KOZHIKODE ▪ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ▪ BELAGAVI ▪ BHUBANESWAR ▪ SHIVAMOGGA ▪ MANGALURU ▪ TIRUPATI ▪ TIRUCHY ▪ TIRUNELVELI ▪ SAMBALPUR ▪ HUBBALLI ▪ DHARMAPURI ▪ KOTTAYAM ▪ KANNUR ▪ VILLUPURAM ▪ KOLLAM ▪ TADEPALLIGUDEM ▪ NAGAPATTINAM ▪ THRISSUR ▪ KALABURAGI

Hegseth backs India's right to defend itself

Global community needs to call out Pak's heinous terror acts: Rajnath to US def secy

MAYANK SINGH @ New Delhi

Rajnath Singh and Pete Hegseth

AMID rising tensions between India and Pakistan in the aftermath of the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack, the US on Thursday assured India that Washington supports New Delhi's right to defend itself.

The US stands in solidarity with India, US Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth told Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday during a telephonic conversation. During the call, the two leaders discussed the Pahalgam terror attack, in which terrorists shot dead 26 people.

"The US Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth called Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to express his sympathies and condolences for the tragic loss of innocent civilian lives in the recent dastardly attack by terrorists in Pahalgam, Jammu & Kashmir," the Ministry of Defence said.

"During the conversation, the Defence Minister told US Defence Secretary that Pakistan has a history of supporting, training and funding terrorist organisations," it added. Singh told Hegseth that Pakistan has been exposed as a rogue state, fuelling global terrorism, and destabilising the region. "The world can no longer turn a blind eye to terrorism," the defence minister told his American counterpart, while urging the global community to "explicitly and unequivocally condemn and call out" heinous acts of terrorism.

Hegseth's call to Rajnath comes after US Secretary of State Mark Rubio spoke to External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar urging India to de-escalate tensions in the South Asian region.

Shah vows to hunt down all terrorists

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday vowed to hunt down each and every terrorist involved in the Pahalgam attack and said all of them will be made answerable for the heinous act. Shah assured the government will not spare any terrorist

TERROR in KASHMIR

Veteran stars Mohanlal, Rajinikanth, Hema Malini, Chiranjeevi, Akshay Kumar and Mithun Chakraborty at the WAVES summit on Thursday | x

WAVES will serve as a major platform where creativity meets coding, software blends with storytelling, and art merges with augmented reality

Allu Arjun

Naga Chaitanya

KS Chithra

Shreya Ghoshal

MM Keeravani

Shah Rukh Khan

Deepika Padukone

Alia Bhatt

Aamir Khan

Pahalgam attack was barbaric and merciless... PM Narendra Modi is a fighter. He will meet any challenge... He will bring peace in J&K and glory to our country

Rajinikanth, Veteran star

Given the size and breadth of the creative opportunity that AI unlocks, it's fair to say that India's next growth will not be in software code but in creativity

Shantanu Narayen, Adobe

ORANGE ECONOMY TO MAKE WAVES: PM

SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI AND PARVEZ SULTAN @ Mumbai/ New Delhi

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday exuded optimism about the growth of India's creative economy, saying it will in future hold a significant share in the country's GDP or Gross Domestic Product.

He was addressing the crème de la crème among artists and creators, policymakers and world leaders from the media and entertainment industry, at the inaugural of the first edition of the World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit (WAVES) in Mumbai.

"Today, in Mumbai, artists, innovators, investors, and policymakers from over 100 countries have gathered under one roof. Together, they are laying the foundation for a global ecosystem that celebrates talent, creativity, and innovation on an international scale... India is emerging as a global hub for film production, digital content, gaming, fashion, music and live concerts... This is the dawn of the Orange Economy in India," said Modi.

Orange economy is a global phrase that encapsulates the creative sector. Modi said India's Orange Economy stands on three strong pillars — content, creativity, and culture. In the coming years, the country's creative economy will hold a significant share in the GDP.

This newspaper was the first to report in July last year that the government planned to host WAVES on the lines of the annual World Economic Forum held in Davos to establish India as a global content hub.

The global animation market is currently worth over $430 billion and is expected to double in the next 10 years. The WAVES summit will open new doors of success for India's animation and graphics industry, he said, adding this was the right time for "create in India, create for world".

Modi underscored India's deep-rooted artistic and spiritual heritage. Indian mythology has always expressed divinity through music and dance, he said, citing Lord Shiva's *damru* (drum) as the first cosmic sound, Goddess Saraswati's veena as the rhythm of wisdom, Lord Krishna's flute as an eternal message of love, and Lord Vishnu's *shankha* (conch) as a call for positive energy.

"In India, growth has been witnessed in the OTT platform. The screen size may be getting smaller but the scope is infinite. The screen is getting micro, but the message is mega so youth can play a major role," the prime minister said, adding there are no boundaries or baggage in the youth's spirit and working style.

Crème de la crème of creative sector in attendance

Veteran actor Anupam Kher outlined the vision behind the WAVES initiative. Singers M M Keeravani, Shreya Ghoshal and Mangli performed the welcome song. WAVES advisory board members, including Mohanlal, Hema Malini, Kartik Aaryan, S S Rajamouli, Rajinikanth, Anil Kapoor, Bhumi Pednekar, Ranbir Kapoor, Aamir Khan, Reliance chairman Mukesh Ambani and Adobe CEO Shantanu Narayen shared their thoughts during the event

SC: DON'T DEMORALISE FORCES DURING CRISIS

SUCHITRA KALYAN MOHANTY @ New Delhi

THE Supreme Court on Thursday refused to examine a PIL seeking a judicial probe into the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack, saying such petitions could demoralise the defence forces fighting terrorism.

A bench of justices Surya Kant and Justice N Kotiswar Singh also castigated the petitioners for seeking a commission headed by a retired SC judge saying judges are not experts in investigation.

The plea was filed by Mohammad Junaid, a resident of Kashmir, along with Fatesh Kumar Sahu and Vicky Kumar.

"Be responsible before filing such PILs. You have some duty towards the country also. This is the way you are trying to demoralize the forces in this hour of crisis and juncture?" the bench said.

Refusing to pass any orders on the PIL, the bench said: "Tell us, since when have retired High Court and Supreme Court judges become experts in investigation? We only decide disputes... Don't ask us to pass orders on such kinds of petitions. Don't ask to pass orders for the Supreme Court judge to investigate."

The SC asked the petitioners to realise the sensitivity of the issue and not make any prayer in the court that may demoralise the forces. "This is a crucial hour when every Indian has joined hands to fight terrorism," it said.

The counsel for the petitioner, then, pleaded for directions to protect Kashmiri students studying outside Jammu and Kashmir.

The bench was unmoved and declined to entertain the plea, but allowed the petitioner to withdraw the plea.

Underground concrete layer cause for B'luru floods

BOSKY KHANNA @ Bengaluru

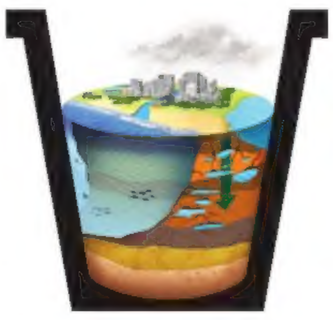
THE problem of flooding is likely to haunt the state capital for years to come whenever it rains heavily.

The reason: uncontrolled and unregulated construction activity over the decade, especially high-rise structures, has led to a 30 to 40-foot deep concrete layer under the city, preventing rainwater from percolating underground and contributing to flooding in various parts of the city, according to geologists and experts.

Worse, the increasing expanse of concrete layer is altering the natural slope and terrain across Bengaluru.

Sajeev Krishnan, professor, Department of Earth Sciences, Indian Institute of Science (IISc), said tall buildings, residential or commercial, not just have deep foundations now, but also multi-level basement (underground) car parking facilities. These foundations and underground parking spaces act as dams, impacting water percolation. This is one of the major reasons for urban flooding.

Krishnan pointed out that Bengaluru is around 1,000 metres above mean sea level on the Deccan Plateau, but the increasing construction activity has altered the natural topography. There is an urgent need to remap Bengaluru and ascertain the present day elevations as the old ones have lost relevance, he said.



TJ Renuka Prasad, retired professor of geology, Bangalore University, said this concrete layer is a result of increased and unplanned urbanisation. Bengaluru has become a victim of this due to the use of technology. The underground concrete layer, he said, is impacting natural subsurface aquifers and restricting groundwater recharge. The situation is worsening with deeper digging for structural foundations. This is also impacting the earth's natural fractures, making the damage irreparable. **P2**

₹10k bet: Kolar man dies after drinking over three quarters

V VELAYUDHAM @ Kolar

A 23-year-old man died after reportedly drinking three quarters (each quarter 180ml) and 90ml of raw whisky while partying with his friends at Poojarahalli village in Kolar district.

Though the incident took place a week ago, it came to light on Thursday. The deceased has been identified as **Karthik**, a resident of Poojarahalli in Nangli police limits.

It is said that during the party, Karthik challenged his friends that he can drink up to five quarters of liquor without diluting it with water or soda. One of his friends immediately announced that they would pay him Rs 10,000 if he succeeded.

Karthik accepted the bet and started drinking whisky. After drinking three quarters and 90ml, he felt uneasy and requested his friends for medical help.

Immediately, they rushed Karthik to the government hospital at Mulbagal, where he died. Sources said that Karthik got married last year and his wife gave birth to a baby just 10 days before the incident.

Superintendent of Police B Nikhil said the initial postmortem report confirmed that Karthik died of alcohol poisoning. "We are awaiting the final report. A case of unnatural death has been registered," he added.

EXPRESS READ

SSLC results to be announced today

Bengaluru: The SSLC (Class 10) results will be declared on Friday. School Education Minister Madhu Bangarappa will officially announce the results at 11.30 am. Students can check their results on the official website. This year, over 8.96 lakh students had appeared for the examinations, including over 4.61 lakh boys and 4.34 lakh girls, at 2,818 centres across the state | **P2**

WITH THIS ISSUE

CITY'S BEST WEEKEND GUIDE INDULGE — 36 PAGES, INCLUDING 24 OF INDULGE (TABLOID)

Kharge wants caste census in 3 months

AICC chief Mallikarjun Kharge has demanded that the Centre begin the census within three months. Failure to do so, he warned, would expose the Centre's lack of seriousness and prove that the announcement was merely for show. Kharge asserted that the party leaders, including himself and Rahul Gandhi, had long been advocating for a caste census.

CM Siddaramaiah, AICC chief Mallikarjun Kharge and DCM DK Shivakumar arrive at an event in Bengaluru | NAGARAJA GADEKAL

Siddu says Centre declared caste census with eye on Bihar polls

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

CHIEF Minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led NDA government had decided to include caste enumeration in the census keeping in mind the coming Bihar Assembly elections. "In 2015 itself, our Congress government in Karnataka spent Rs 192 crore on conducting a socio, economical and educational survey. Inspired by this and keeping the Bihar elections in mind, the Union government had decided to conduct the census," he told reporters here.

Siddaramaiah said that he would give full credit to Rahul Gandhi, who had been seeking such a caste census for long, for the Union government's decision.

"I welcome the Union government's decision to include caste enumeration in the census. To ensure social justice to people, a social and educational survey should be conducted along with this census. The ceiling of 50% for extending reservation should be removed to make quota proportional to the population," he said.

Like Rahul Gandhi, he had also sought reservation in private educational institutions as per Article 15, Clause (5) of the Constitution, Siddaramaiah said.

He said that a decision on the socio-economic and educational survey (SES-2015) report will be taken at the cabinet meeting on May 9.

On whether the Centre's census will affect the state government's survey, he said it will not as the SES-2015 report has already been presented before the cabinet. The Centre is yet to conduct the census, he added. **P4**

Mob lynching case: Mangaluru rural inspector, two constables suspended

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Mangaluru

MANGALURU Rural police station inspector Shivakumar KR, head constable Chandra P and constable Yallalinga have been suspended in connection with the recent mob lynching case.

City police commissioner Anupam Agrawal issued the suspension order on Thursday. They have been suspended pending disciplinary action against them. The suspension order cited gross negligence by Shivakumar and two other police personnel and their failure to alert higher officials, despite having information about the mob lynching.

Deepak, a traffic head constable, had alerted the police about some cricket players and spectators assaulting a man. Also, while recording witness testimony or "panchanama", cricket players and spectators were made "panchas" or independent witnesses. Despite having information about mob lynching, the inspector failed to bring it to the notice of higher officials. They registered an unnatural death case initially and later converted it into a case of mob lynching, the order against Shivakumar stated.

The order against Chandra stated that Deepak had first informed him about mob lynching. But Chandra did not collect any further information nor informed higher officials.

Yallalinga was suspended for negligence of not informing the higher officials about the cricket match or the incident. **P4**

DOPING SHAME

As many as 186 adevrse analytical findings were recorded between April 2023-Jan 2024; Gujarat, UP top Khelo India funding list: Ministry's annual report | **P11**